A SERIOUS

EXHORTATION

TO THE

PRESENT and SUCCEEDING

Generation

IN

NEW-ENGLAND;

Earnestly calling upon all to Endeavour that the Lords *Gracious Presence* may be continued with *Posterity.*

Being the Substance of the

LAST SERMONS

PREACHED

By *Eleazar Mather*, late Pastor of the Church in *Northampton* in *New England.*

Judg. 2. 10,17. *And also all that Generation were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord nor yet the works which he had done for Israel* —— *They turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord; but they did not so*

Psal. 78. 3,4,5. — *Our fathers have told us — we will not hid them from their children, shewing the Generation to come the praises of the Lord — He established a Law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children, that the Generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children.*

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TO THE

CHURCH

AND

INHABITANTS

OF

Northampton in *N.E.*

Beloved in the Lord Jeſus,

HOw the gracious Preſence *of God did accompany your faithfull, and now bleſſed* Paſtor, *during the time of his Miniſtration (even for the ſpace of Eleven years) in the Goſpel amongſt you, it needs not, (nor is it meet) for me to ſay, your ſelves having been witneſſes thereof, and many amongſt you being the ſeals* of his Miniſtry. *I have heard it from ſundry of you, that in his latter time you obſerved more then ordinary of God to be in him and with him: In which reſpect it may be preſumed, that any thing of his will be welcome to you, but more eſpecially his laſt* Labours. *Wherefore the* enſuing Sermons *are commended to your ſerious and practical perſuall.*

What is here Publiſhed, is done from your Paſtors *Notes, as left written with his own hand, which indeed come every way ſhort of what the ſame Sermons were when delivered* vivâ voce. *Had himſelf emitted them, they would have been farre more accurate. Nevertheleſs, I was willing that theſe ſhould come forth, becauſe the Matter therein contained is weighty and Spirituall, and the Manner of handling ſerious and ſearching; and partly becauſe they were his* laſt Sermons *It is ſaid,* 2 Sam. 23. 1. Now theſe be [*the laſt words*] of David the ſweet ſinger in Iſrael: *Remarkable words they are, becauſe the laſt words. Some obſerve, that the Swan a little before death ſings the moſt ſweetly. Theſe* Sermons *are the* Cygneæ (*concliones*) Cantiones *(as famous* Whitakers *Laſt Sermon is not unfitly ſtyled) the* Swan-like Songs *of him* that was *once a ſweet Singer in your Iſrael.*

The dying words of a Father are to be much remembred: Behold, here are the dying *(and yet living)* Sermons *of him* that was *your Spiritual Father.*

But especially I was inclined to Publish what is here presented to you, because the dying Counsel *which my Reverend Father* (ὁ νῦν ἐν ἁγίοις) *left with me, was, that I should seriously endeavour the good of the Rising Generation in this Country* (a). *What my Father said in the particulars and circumstances of it, I communicated to my Brother,* (a Brother *he was to me by Nature, as well as in the Lord, which last is indeed, as the* (b) *Ancient observes, the greatest and best Fraternity) which occasioned him to Preach these Sermons, and causeth me now to expose them to publick view, that so you especially* that are of the Rising Generation, *not onely in* Northampton, *but in other places in this Country, may (if it be the will of God to bless Endeavours that way) be awakened to consider the things that belong to your peace, and that before they are hid from your eyes. However, what is here done* shall turn for a Testimony.

There was another Sermon intended *by the Author, which should have been directory to those of* the Rising Generation, *as additionall to the Motives which concern them: But (as* Elihu *speaketh in another case)* at this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place, *that those who are the* spes gregis, *the Hope of the* succeeding Generation, *should by the Lord be snatched away, when they are in the midst of their dayes, and also in the midst of faithfull Endeavours for the good of* their Generations. *That blessed Man* *, *unto whom* New-England *doth under God owe it self more then unto any man, was much moved when but one Minister, being young in years, was taken away by death,* Because *(said he)* it portends evil to the Rising Generation. *What shall we say then, when not one, but many such are taken away? Is there not* evil to come? *Is it nothing, that besides former Strokes, which have been exceeding awfull and tremendous, the last year, within the space of a Twelve-moneth, no less then Eight persons were taken, that were to our Israel as the* Chariots and the Horsemen *thereof? Is it nothing that since that, even this Year also, of those in the Ministry amongst our selves, a greater number then that have been near unto death? Oh that I might prove a false Prophet when I often say,* The Gospel I fear is going, the Lord Jesus is departing from these Coasts. *But it will be well if Divine*(c) Herberts *words prove not oraculous, viz.* That the Sun of the Gospel which is come into these Western parts of the World, shall return again from hence. *Will the Lord do any thing, and not reveal it unto his servants the Prophets? Our Prophets have foretold us of these dayes. To suppress what some of late upon Death-beds have expressed:* Our Prophets and our Fathers *have forewarned us of what is like to come. Renowned* Hooker *would many times express his fears,* that God would punish the wanton spirit of Professors in *New-England* towards Magistrates and Ministers, with the loss and want of able men in both Orders. *Is not this fulfilling? Some, it is*

(a) See my Fathers Life, p. 27.

(b) *Fratres in seculo fratres in Domino, quæ posterior major est & melior fraternitas.* Ambros.

φύσει τε καὶ πίστει ἀδελφοί. Chrys.

* Mr. *Cotton* in his sermon on *Psa.* 116. 15. preached upon occasion of the death of M *John Oliver.*

(c) *Vide* his Poems of the Church Militant.

is true, that have too much of that ſpirit which was in the Wilderneſs of old, when it was ſaid, You Moſes and Aaron have killed the people of the Lord, *think that God hath taken away his Servants in wrath to them, and in mercy to thoſe that ſurvive. But if it be ſo, how then cometh it to paſs that breaches are not made up again? There have been many* bereaved Congregations *of late; Either the Lord raiſeth up no Supply at all for them, or it is long firſt, or it is in ſuch a way as cauſeth many* ſad thoughts of heart. *Surely theſe things proclaim aloud, that there is wrath in Heaven againſt us, if we turn not to him that ſmiteth us. Shall we not be afraid when the Trumpet hath been blown? Not only the Trumpet of Gods Works, but of his Word alſo hath ſounded loud in our ears. Shall it be forgotten that the Lord did long ſince ſtir up the Spirit of that holy Man of God. Mr.* Shepard, *to Preach many Sermons from* 2 Chron. 12 8? *There are ſolemn Paſſages in thoſe Sermons, too many here to be mentioned. And elſwhere the ſame Author hath awfull Expreſſions. In one place he thus ſpeaketh,* (d) O *New-England, New-England!* I dare not yet tell thee what Chriſt Jeſus hath to ſay to thee. *In another place thus*; (e) Verily I am afraid ſuch a diſmall night is towards— ſuch ſore Afflictions of Famine, War, Blood, Mortality, [*Death of Gods precious Servants eſpecially*] that the Lord will fill the hearts of all Churches, Families, Chriſtians, that ſhall be ſaved in thoſe dayes, with ſuch rendings, rearings, ſhakings, anguiſh of ſpirit, as ſcarce never more in the worſt days of our forefathers, & that this ſhall continue until the remnant that eſcape ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Bleſſed be the face and feet of that Miniſter that ſhall come unto us in Chriſts Name. *And again,* (f) Verily the time draweth on, wherein the Lord will come for fruits from his Vineyard, and if he findes it not, aſſuredly he will not be beholding to us for obedience, [*He can raiſe his glory out of other people, and carry his Goſpel to them*] who ſhall bring forth the fruits of it. [*The Lord will ſhortly lay his Ax to the Root of our Tree*] and if we will not ſerve the Lord in this good Land, in the abundance of peace and mercy, we ſhall ſerve our enemies in hunger, cold, and nakedneſs. *Woe be. And* (g) another that was *once a famous* Seer *in our Iſrael, had ſolemn thoughts concerning this thing, who ſaith,* Now our Candleſticks cannot but lament in darkneſs, when their Lights are gone; and the thrones of *David* mourn, that ſo many of our late Worthies can be ſeen there no more; our deſireable men that remain, remove from us, and few there are that return. And as for thoſe that riſe up amongſt our ſelves, ſuch is the portion of this *Jeruſalem,* (that though for her time ſhe hath not been an unfruitful Mother, yet) they are but few that will guide her amongſt all the ſons whom ſhe hath brought forth, yea very few that take her by the hand of all the ſons that ſhe hath brought up. What the Counſel of the Lord is concerning the bereaved Churches of *New-England,* is a ſolemn and awful Meditation. The non-conſider-

(d) On the Parable of the Virgins, *p.* 96.

(e) In Sound Believer, *p.* 250 *firſt Edit.*

(f) *Ibid. p.* 346.

(g) Mr. *Norton* in the Life of Mr. *Cotton*, *p.* 46, 47.

ing that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come, was a ſymptomatical and threatning incogitancy in *Iſaiahs* time, &c.

Now if the Lord ſhould be provoked to deprive ſucceeding Generations *of the Goſpel*, N w-England *which hath been a* G ſhen, *will become the darkeſt place under Heaven. Yet I cannot but have further take notice of the weighty words which are fallen from a judicious Pen, writing to a people that once enjoyed great and precious Means of grace*; Such a lamentable condition (*ſaith* (n) *he*) hath been and may be the lot of ſuch places and people which God hath ſometimes highly honoured, when they grow fat and wanton together. *Bethel* hath proved *Beth-aven*. In after-time we finde young profane Mockers in *Bethel*, and ſcornful Neuters in *Penuel*. Go to *Shiloh*: Think of the ſometimes glorious Churches of *Aſia*: As Empires and Kingdomes, ſo particular Churches have their periods. I have ſometimes on purpoſe viſited ſome places where God hath before planted his Church, and a faithful Miniſtry, to ſee if I could diſcern any footſteps and remembrances of ſuch a mercy, and lo they were all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the ſtone wall thereof is broken down: and which is more ſad, in ſome of them never, in others very hardly built up again; God proving ſevere when we grow wanton, and ſo as he removeth the Candleſtick, when we play or fight by the light of the Candle ſet up in it: So he is very hardly induced to ſet it up again in that place where it hath been wantonly or frowardly put out. There are more hopes of recovering a particular perſon fallen, by virtue of an Everlaſting Covenant made with him; but a particular Church or people (unleſs it be that of the *Jews*, who in the great Iubile after their Rejection ſhall again return to their former poſſeſſions) cannot claim the like priviledge of ſuch a Covenant. The Ark never returned to the ſame place from whence it was in a way of judgement removed. And the glory of the Lord, when after its gradual removes was at laſt quite gone from the firſt Temple, was not fully reſtored in the ſecond, untill Chriſts firſt coming, nor will it be in their Rejection till his ſecond. I think there will be found very few inſtances of *Gods Preſence* and Ordinances long enjoyed by a people, and after abuſed and rejected, if thereupon loſt, eaſily (if at all) reſtored. The Faith once delivered to the Saints, is not wont to be either received or loſt the ſecond time, &c. *Hæc ille. I omit here the Conjecture of Learned* (i) Mede, *that the* Apocalyptical *Gog and Magog ſhall ariſe out of* America. *Or making no* (k) *difference between the Children of the Church, and the Children of Infidels, hath a direct tendency thereunto.*

Now Mercy forbid that theſe things ſhould ever be verified upon New-England. *Yet it muſt needs be acknowledged that the Goſpel hath not been valued as it ought to have been.*

But (Beloved) although I have thus ſpoken, I intend not thereby any re-

flection

(b) Dr. *Tuckney* in his Epiſtle on Mr. *Cottons* Book of *Eccleſ.*

(i) See his letters to D. *Twiſs & conjectura de Gogo & Magogo*

(k) See a diſcuſſing Teſtimony againſt this evil in the enſuing Sermons *p.* 24, 25.

fection upon you who were the peculiar Charge of him whoſe dying words *are thus* revived *before you. You have approved your ſelves an* obedient *people* unto them who have had the rule over you. *O! it remaineth Brethren, that you be ſtedfaſt in the Faith and Order of the Goſpel, which your bleſſed* Paſtor *did from the Lord inſtruct you in.* Remember *alſo his* Converſation. *Some of your ſelves obſerved, that in his latter years he grew exceedingly in the grace of God, which cauſed you to fear and ſay that you ſhould not enjoy him long, becauſe you ſaw that he was ripe for Heaven.*

Sic Roſa ſic Violæ primâ moriuntur in herbâ,
Candida nec toto lilia menſe nitent.

Follow him as he followed Chriſt: Then as you were his Joy here, you will be his Crown, when you ſhall ſee him again in another and a better World. I reſt,

From my Study in *Boſton* in *N.E.* 1. 1. 1671.

Yours in the Lord Jeſus,

Increaſe Mather.

A WORD

A WORD
TO THE
Preſent and Succeeding Generation
IN
NEW-ENGLAND.

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1 Kings 8. 57.

The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forſake us.

IN the beginning of this Chapter we have the Hiſtorical Relation of a General Aſſembly of the Repreſentative Body of *Iſrael*, the end whereof was the bringing in the Ark of God into its proper place; from *ver.* 1, to 6. This occaſion *Solomon* improves unto the manifeſtation of his Piety towards God, and Reſpect towards *Iſrael*; as will be evident by taking a view of the ſeveral parts of this Chapter, which are four:

1. His Benedictory Oration, from *ver.* 14, to 22.
2. His famous Prayer, from *ver.* 22, to 54.
3. The Bleſſing of his People, to *ver.* 62.
4. His Feſtivals, or offering Sacrifice, from *ver.* 62, to the end. The Text falls within the third of theſe, *ſcil.* His Bleſſing: Where we have

Firſt, A thankful Acknowledgement of Gods mercy, *ver.* 56.

Secondly, A renewed *Prayer for Gods Preſence*, in this verſe. So that this Verſe is an earneſt Petition, expreſſed

1. *Affirmatively*, by way of Supplication.
2. *Negatively*, by way of Deprecation. In the former we have 1. The Petition it ſelf, *The Lord our God be with us.*

2. The Illuſtration, *As he was with our fathers.* In the latter there is a gemination of the ſame Requeſt, by divers expreſſions importing the ſame thing, *Let him not leave us, nor forſake us.* And all this is to note the weightineſs of the thing prayed for, and earneſtneſs of deſire that it might be granted. Whence the Doctrine to be obſerved from the words, is,

Doct. *That the Continuance of the Lords gracious Preſence with a People, from fathers to children after them, is a ſpecial favour of God, and much to be deſired by all that are cordial to the weal of the Iſrael of God.* Or thus: *That the Lord would be graciouſly preſent with the ſucceeding Generation, as he was with their fathers, not leaving nor forſaking of them, is the great deſire of thoſe that wiſh well to the Lords people.*

See ſome Scriptures for this.

That the Lords gracious Preſence is a ſpecial favour, and much to be deſired, ſee *Gen.*26.3. This we ſee was *Moſes* his great requeſt, *Exod.* 33.15. *q.d.* what is an Angel without thee? what is *Canaan* without thee? See alſo *Joſh.* 1.5. and *Judg.*6.16. And that the ſucceſſion of the Lords Preſence from one Generation to another, is eſpecially to be deſired, ſee 1 *Chron.*22.10. and 28.20. *Pſal* 90.16.

A few words briefly for the Explication of this Doctrine: Application being the main thing intended.

Queſt.1. *What is meant by the Lords being with them?*

Anſw. Firſt, there is an *Eſſential Preſence* of God, whereby he is every where; not excluded out of Hell, *Pſal.*139.7. this is not the thing that *Solomon* prayes for here.

Secondly, there is a *Gracious Preſence* of God; and this is the thing here deſired: and this contains as much good as poſſibly can be deſired; univerſality, fulneſs, perpetuity of good is in the Lords gracious Preſence. This in the inchoation of it is the beginning of Heaven, in the perfection of it tis the compleatment of Heaven. Now God is graciouſly preſent divers wayes.

1. *By his Providence*, there is a ſpecial Providence of God towards his People; the Lord doth in a ſpecial manner ſee and take

take notice of his people, as here *ver.* 29. *His eyes are open upon his Temple*, and upon his Church continually, 2 *Chron.* 16.9. preſerving and providing for them, *Gen.*28.20. & 48. 15,16. *Heb.*13.5,10. and protecting of them, *Iſa.*43.2. and comforting of them, *Chap.*41.17.

2. *By his Ordinances*, whether in Church or Commonwealth. In this reſpect was *Solomons* Petition: The Temple was a viſible Teſtimony of Gods Preſence, as here *ver.*13. *An houſe for the Lord to dwell in*, a ſetled place for him to abide in; and therefore the name of that place where Ordinances are ſet up, and managed with power and glory, is ſaid to be *Jehovah-Shammah*, Ezek. 48. 35. The works of God are ſeen in the Sanctuary, *Pſal.*68.24.

3. *By his Spirit*, working grace in the heart: there is the in-dwelling Preſence of God in the Heart, as in a Temple; *Rev.*3.20. *Sup with them*, i. e. keep a continual feaſt in their hearts.

Queſt. 2. *What is here meant by fathers?*

Anſ. In generall; *All Superiours, and Anceſtors. There are fathers by natural generation*; *immediate*, as *Abraham* to *Iſaac*, or *mediate*. In a word, all Progenitors, *Deut.*10.28. Fathers by age, 1 *Joh.*2.13. Fathers by office, in a Civil ſenſe, 2 *Kings* 5.13. and in a Spiritual ſenſe, 2 *Kings* 13.14. Thoſe that are inſtrumental in regeneration of ſinners, are Spiritual fathers to them, 1 *Cor.*4.13.

Queſt.3. *What is meant by leaving or forſaking a people, which is the contrary to be with us?*

Anſ. Theſe two words note the ſame thing; one and the ſame thing is implied under theſe divers expreſſions: but the word is doubled, to ſignifie earneſtneſs of deſire not to be left, *q.d. Do not let any thing befall us, that may look like leaving or forſaking.* To the more full underſtanding of what is intended hereby, it will be convenient to ſhew the various acceptations of theſe two exprrſſions. 1. Leaving, is ſometimes taken for *committing to anothers truſt*, Gen.39.6. *q.d. Let us not be committed unto others.* 2. *To deſiſt*, or break off from a thing, *Job* 9.27. ſo here; *q.d.* Do not break off former kindneſs:

That faithfulneſs and mercy that fathers had experience of, do not put a ſtop to it at their children, but let there be a ſucceſſion of grace to their Succeſſors. 3. To caſt off by way of contempt, *Prov.*3.3. *Hoſ.*4.11. And for that word *Forſake*, it ſignifies liberty, or freedome in leaving, 1 *Sam.*9.5. So here; when the Lord *gives over to care* for a people, and ſuffers them to do as they will, and ſhift as they can, then he forſaketh. 2. To looſen, or break in pieces: *Iſa.*33.3. when tacklings are looſened, and the Lord ſets a people adrift as it were, and lets them go off to Sea, then doth he forſake. 3. To pluck up and break down, *Iſa.*16.8. the word there is the ſame that is in the Text. 4. To ſcatter, *Judg.*15.8. So here *Solomon* prayes that the Lord would not ſuffer them to be ſcattered.

Queſt.4. *Why ſhould we thus pray? and why in ſpecial for the Lords Preſence to ſucceeding Generations?*

*Reaſ.*1. *Becauſe of the good that is in the enjoyment of Gods Preſence*, even all good, *Gen.*17.1. *Pſal.*30.5. & 63.3. Have him, and have all: A man cannot want light if he have the Sun, nor water if he have the Fountain, nor any good if he have God, *Pſal.*23.4.

*Reaſ.*2. Becauſe of the evil that enſueth if God leave: *Woe to ſuch*, Hoſ.9.12. *Woe to them when I depart from them*; the Lord is angry indeed when it is thus. A Parent is angry when he caſts his childe out of doors. *Deut.*31.17. *Mine anger ſhall be kindled, and I will forſake them, many evils ſhall befall them, ſo that they will ſay in that day, Are not theſe evils come upon us, becauſe our God is not amongſt us?* There is no help in Heaven for us, if God leave us: This is the bitterneſs and venome of all Gods Judgements. As every affliction is ſweetened with Gods preſence, ſo the Lords dereliction imbitters every affliction: this reacheth the heart, *Pſal.*42.10. yea if God leave a people, then they are ſure to be given up to utter ruine. If the Soul leave the Body, it becometh loathſome, and muſt be buried: ſo it is here. To ſee a Soul forſaken of God is a doleful ſight, a flood of vengeance then breaks in, and there is no bank to keep it out: for if God leave, all Creatures leave too, ſo that men ſhall finde no ſuccour or favour elſwhere; Then delivered into

hands

hands of Enemies, 2 *Kings* 21.14. *Pſal.*21.11. yea, then men will be a terrour to themſelves, 1 *Sam.*28.15. In a word, to be caſt out of Gods preſence is the beginning of Hell, *Matth.* 25.41.

Moreover, there are ſpecial Reaſons why the *Lords Preſence* ſhould be deſired to ſucceeding Generations, which ſhall be but mentioned.

Firſt, from the leſs to the greater: we deſire other bleſſings for Children, much more ſhould we deſire this; you deſire to leave an Inheritance to your Children, *Prov.* 13.22. & 15.14. there is much more reaſon to deſire that they might inherit the Lords bleſſing.

Secondly, Becauſe they have as much need of the Lords Preſence as their fathers; their fathers could not live and glorifie God in their generation, had not the Lord been with them, no more can thoſe that ſucceed them, there is like ground to deſire for the one as for the other, in reſpect of need, that one hath as well as other: 1. In reſpect of the weightineſs of the work; the work of one Generation is no leſs then of another, which is to ſerve God, and advance the Intereſt of Religion. 2. In reſpect of Inſtruments that carry on the work; Alas! poor feeble creatures, little children, and what can children do in Family-affairs? 1 *Kings* 3.7. 3. In reſpect of Adverſaries, difficulties: No age, but alwayes there is much to hinder the work of God, *within* are the ſame corruptions, Pride, Unbelief, and *without* are the ſame or worſe enemies; nay, later ages are and will be worſe then former, 2 *Tim.*3.1.

Thirdly, Becauſe this is the Generation-work of every one, to pray and labour that the Lords Preſence may be with ſucceeding Generations.

Fourthly, Such as do not thus, will incurre the brand of Apoſtates, and be caſt off from God for ever for caſting off God, 2 *Chron.*15.2.

Fiftkly, It makes much for the glory of God, that the gracious Preſence of the Lord ſhould be continued from fathers unto children, therefore this is much to be deſired and prayed for. But to apply this.

Uſe I. Hence take notice what bottom and foundation it is that we ſtand on; all good is wrapped up in this, *The Lords being with us.* Can we ſay that we are ſafe becauſe of former mercies? The Lord hath been with us in dayes of old, hath bleſſed our fathers, and are we therefore ſecure? No verily, he that hath been with them, may leave us; he that hath been a Saviour in former Generations, may become a wayfaring man, as a man aſtonied that cannot ſave, *Jer.*14.8,9. If we forſake him, he will forſake us, notwithſtanding all former engagements. It is not what God hath done heretofore, that will make us a happy people at preſent: it's the wiſdome of a people to diſcern the Lords diſpenſation, *Pſal.*107.43. and an heavy ſad Judgement it is, not to diſcern the Lords departing, *Hoſ.*2. Are you like to have good dayes? Are things like to go well in your time? Is Truth and Peace like to be in your dayes? If the *Lord be with you, as he was with your fathers*, then it will be, otherwiſe not. Oh therefore learn to know the footſteps of God in your own Souls, for the Lord draws near by his Spirit, and departs firſt by the Spirits departing; therefore conſider of this, have you as much of God as your fathers had?

Uſe II. What are we to think of them that never prayed ſuch a prayer as this is? Verily they bear little love to the place or people where they live, that never made this requeſt. Many pray for a good Harveſt, outward temporal mercies, but not for the Lords Preſence: yea, ſome there are that are not ſenſible of the Lords departing from them, but if they have outward Comforts, all is well; others care not for Gods Preſence, *Job* 21.14. A miſerable frame this is: for, *They that are far from the Lord ſhall periſh*, Pſal.73.26.

Uſe III. Take notice of the Preſence of God, how he doth come or go, approach near, or draw off from us. If this be the great thing to be deſired, then it is the duty of all to obſerve, what grounds of hopes, what of fears, reſpecting the Lords being with us, as in dayes of old. Much of the Lords Preſence hath been ſhewed unto this people in theſe *Ends of the Earth*, Deut.32.2,10,11. We may truly ſay with the Church, *Pſ.*44. 1,2. *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have*

have told us, what works thou didſt in their dayes, in times of old, how thou didſt, &c. It ſtands all to conſider (both ſuch of former Generations, that are yet ſurviving, and thoſe of this other Generation, that are ſucceeding in the room of their fathers) What is God with us as in times paſt? God was with them, and is he with us as he was with them? Let us view the footſteps of God, and mark whether the Lord be with us as in dayes of old. And for that end I ſhall ſpread before you ſome *Signs of the Lords leaving a People.* And the firſt is this.

Firſt Sign. *When the Lord gives up a people to a ſlight ſpirit*, not minding the Lords Preſence, whether with them, or farre off from them: Surely the Lord cannot be very near unto that people, that are not ſenſible of it. The preſence of Gods grace is a very evident ſenſible thing, and therefore if men feel not this, nor mourn not for the want of it, it is a ſymptome the Lord is withdrawn. Hence the Lord warns his people, *Jer.*6.8. *Be inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee*; if unſenſible, and unmindful, I will be gone further and further from you, *Jer.*26. when people are left to a regardleſs heart, reſpecting the tokens of the Lords diſpleaſure againſt them, *Hoſ.* 7. 9. *Gray hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not*; feel other things leave them, but not the Lord. It is not with them as it was wont to be in reſpect of Trade, the fruits of the Earth, *&c.* this they take notice of, but take no notice how it is with them in reſpect of the Lords Preſence. Jer 44.17,18. *Then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and ſaw no evil; but ſince wanted all things, have been conſumed by the ſword, and by the famine:* They take notice of outward plenty, and outward ſcarcity, of abundance and plenty reſpecting things of this life, but as to the Lords Preſence with them, not a word ſpoken of that. As mens hearts upon ſerious conſideration of the Lords nearneſs to, or removal from them, are affected or not affected therewith, ſo is the Lord anſwerably abiding with, or leaving of a People. The Lord is farre gone, when there is no enquiry whether he be gone or no. Oh what cauſe of awakening upon this account? What is the ſtirring Enquiry of men in theſe dayes? What is the ſolemn Enquiry

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that paſſeth from man to man, from Plantation to Plantation, from Generation to Generation? Is this the Enquiry of the old and gray-headed, Oh, is the Lord with us as he was wont to be? Is this the demand of the Riſing Generation, Have we as much of the Preſence of God, as our fathers before us had? Do we live as near, are we as much acquainted with God? Is the ſame Spirit poured out upon us that was on them?

2. *When the Lord takes away the chief Inſtruments and Means of his Preſence, and gracious Bleſſing to a People.* When men have a minde to depart, and remove their dwelling, they will ſend away their Plate, and ſuch things as are of greateſt worth and price with them; ſo here: Is not the Lord packing up the chief Goods he hath, and removing them away, when he takes away Props and Pillars? this declares that he hath left the houſe, and cares not much though it tumbles down, *Iſa.* 3. 1, 3, 8. When Ordinances are gone, and they that ſhould diſpenſe them gone, this is a ſign that God himſelf is gone, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. A Generall when he gives order to remove his Standard, it is an evidence that he himſelf is reſolved to go thence; ſo it is here: As ſuch are pledges of the Lords Preſence, ſo their removal, eſpecially when there are not others of the like grace and holineſs to ſtand up, and fill their places, declare that the Lord is upon his departure. It went full ill with *Iſrael* when *Joſhua*, and the Elders that out-lived *Joſhua* were gathered to their fathers. It was a true and weighty ſpeech of one, *viz. That the Deaths of godly Elders, oft proves Deaths-day of Religion, or at leaſt the day of Deaths wound to Religion.* Its both a ſign and an occaſion of degeneracy, and ſo of the Lords Spirit departing from a people. *There is a ſpecial hand of Gods Providence exerciſed in the deceaſe of his Worthies*; It is either in great wrath, or in great mercy: If it awaken not to a Spirit of Mourning and Supplication, unfeigned and univerſal Repentance, its a ſure ſign its in wrath, and ſpeaks nothing but woe to that people. *Iſa.* 57. 1. *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* When the Kings ſpecial Favourites are diſmiſſed from Court,

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its a token the King intends to remove from that place, where his Majeſty was wont to reſide: So when God diſmiſſeth his righteous ones, it is a ſign that he himſelf will be gone ere long.

3. *When outward proſperity is unſanctified, When the abounding of temporal bleſſings is accompanied with the abounding of ſin.* Though proſperity in it ſelf be of that nature, that it is hard to judge of love or hatred, preſence or abſence of God, with or from a people thereby; yet as it is attended or accompanied, ſo it is evidential, though not in it ſelf, yet in the effects and concomitants, and conſequents of it: when proſperity falls on a people that have learned to want as well as to abound; when creatures are means to convey divine favour from God, and hearty obedience unto God, then they are ſigns of the Lords preſence with a people, *Joel* 2.26. But when men have proſperity, outward riches, and know not what to do with them, beſides making gods of them, this is a ſign that the Lords gracious preſence is not among a people, when men loſe Religion in the world, and what they get in temporals they loſe in Spirituals, *Pſal.* 106.15. Outward proſperity is a worm at the root of godlineſs, ſo that Religion dies when the World thrives, *Deut.* 28.47. & 32.15. There is ſometimes a palpable difference as to Holineſs, between a low under ſtate, and a flouriſhing thriving condition: for the former, ſee *Zeph.* 3.11. for the latter, ſee *Hoſ.* 13.6. Oh conſider, the time was when leſs of the world, but was there not more of Heaven? leſs Trading, Buying, Selling, but more Praying, more watching over our own hearts, more cloſe walking; leſs plenty, and leſs iniquity; men lay aſide old Prayer, are almoſt afraid to put up the *New-England* Prayer, *Lord keep me poor, and keep me humble.* In a word, if I were to point out a people from whom God is going, by one ſure Character, it ſhould be this, Such people as can make up that they want in God, with the preſence of the Creature; can ſtop the crannies, and fill empty places of the Heart, with Creatures and Creature-comforts: they have not ſo much as they were wont to have, yet can fill up the room of God with worldly delights; though God be abſent, yet if they

can get more of the world, that ſerves turn, *Jer.*2.13. Hence mens hearts ſay, How ſhall I live without my State, Honour, Peace, Friendſhip? but not, How ſhall I live without God?

4. *When a Spirit of Diviſion and Contention in matters of Gods Worſhip, is the Spirit of the Times, and thence Religion turns into Faction*, that is an evidence that the Lord is a leaving of a people. The Lord cares not to dwell in a ſhaking tottering houſe long: A Spirit of Love and Unity is an evidence of the Lords preſence; *God is love*, and where love rules, God dwells, 1 *Joh.*4.16. where *Brethren live together in unity, there the Lord commands the bleſſing, even life for evermore*, Pſal.133. 1, 3. Unity keeps God amongſt a people, 2 *Cor.* 13. 11. but when Societies crack in pieces, room is made for God himſelf to be gone: What father loves to dwell among fighting and quarrelling children? His voice to ſuch is, *I'le be gone untill you agree.* When a Houſe is a-fire, what wiſe man will continue therein? Again, a Spirit of Contention is an evidence of Gods anger and diſpleaſure againſt a people, *Lam.*4.16. and ſpeaks ruine each to other, *Judg.*9.20,23. *Numb.*21.28,29. eſpecially when a bleſſing is taken away from the means of healing, *Jer.* 14.18. Hence this evil follows upon ſuch diviſion, that Religion is turned into Faction, Godlineſs lyes in Parties and Siding. and in this and that particular Apprehenſion. As *Jehu* deſtroyed the *houſe of Ahab*, and the *Worſhippers of Baal*, out of *a factious Spirit*, and thence meaſured all Religion according to his own factious Spirit, 2 *Kings* 10.15,16. And thus it was in Chriſts time, there was a diviſion touching matters of Religion, ſome for one way, and ſome for another, and thus *contending about Circumſtances, they loſt the Subſtance.* In a word, when men become moſt irreligious in their Religion (I cannot ſpeak it nor you hear it with grief of heart enough) Religion is the occaſion of our Contentions and breach of Peace.

5. *When the Lord withholds the efficacious and victorious operations of his Spirit from his own Ordinances, that though men have them plentifully diſpenſed, yet they are but as a dead letter, they are the words and breath of men onely, without life to their Souls:* for as on the contrary, no ſurer pledge of the Lords preſence

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with a people, then when the Spirit accompanies the Ordinances, and makes them effectual for the good of Souls: when the Lord is at the heels of the Meſſenger, and ſtriketh home to the heart of poor creatures, that ſee God himſelf in Ordinances, 1 *Cor.* 14.25. this is a ſign the Lord is with them: ſo when they are continued to men, but the Spirit is not in them, they have them, but no God in them; when the Lord abſents himſelf from thoſe ſet meetings for people to meet him in, now its undeniable the Lord is leaving ſuch a people. *But when is this*, you will ſay, *that the efficacy and overcoming power of the Spirit is withheld from Ordinances? Anſw.* This is matter of great weight, and therefore I ſhall a little ſtay upon it, and ſhew you when it is, in theſe ſpecialties.

1. *When mens hearts are not ſtirred, and quickned, and warmed by them*, when the Word is lodged onely in the Porch, and never cometh into the Houſe: Men get ſomething to talk of, and hold up a Profeſſion in the world, and bear up the Name of Religion withall, but their Hearts are not wrought upon; There are not ſuitable Impreſſions upon mens *Hearts*, to the Notions that men have in their *Heads*; for the Word comes in power, when it paſſes through all outſides, and enters into the heart, *Pſal.* 45.5. *Heb.* 4.12. *A diſcerner of thoughts and intents of the heart*, makes the heart naked; ſo *è contra*, when the Word is without power and virtue on the Souls of men, when God is not in it, when the Word is light without heat or life, as the Sun under a Cloud, it warms not the Earth. Saints are wont to ſay of the Word, *By that I have been quickened*, *Pſal.* 119. But when the Word is like a cold fire, that men ſit by and finde no warmth, ſurely the Spirit of God is not there, for *the Spirit quickneth*, 1 Cor. 3.6. Joh. 6.63. If Chriſt ſpeak, then there's life.

2. *When Ordinances are onely occaſions and means of diſquiet, and of diſreſt unto men*, but have no further efficacy upon them, but to cauſe them to go with galled and condemned Conſciences; ſome have not ſo much as this, live and die in Security, having not one awakened thought all their dayes: But not many that live under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, but the

Word is to them at ſometimes, as *Rev.*11.9. a Word that did *torment them that dwell on the Earth.* Though they live under means of grace, and the Eternal Spirit is wreſtling with them, yet they are ſo ſhut up under unbelief, and ſo in league and love with luſt, that the Word doth but torment them. There is a generation of Chriſtleſs ſinners, that fret with indignation and vexation, that they cannot enjoy pleaſures, and follow luſts with quiet and peace; and if they would ſpeak out what is in their heart, they would ſay to Chriſt, as the Devils, *Mat.*8.29. *Art thou come to torment us?* or as it was with thoſe that heard *Steven, they were cut to the heart, and gnaſhed on him with their teeth,* Acts 7.54. Men that are in love with luſts, they cannot endure that God ſhould come near them, they are not able to bear the ſtrokes, whereby he would break their ſtiff Spirit, but grudge againſt the Lord himſelf, and fall out with the Word that would convince them, *Rom.* 2. 8. Hence in the ſecret of their hearts they could be glad to hear no more ſuch Awakening, Heart-ſearching, Soul-rowſing Truths: *They ſay to God, Depart from us*, Job 21. 14. They pronounce that Sentence upon themſelves, which the Lord will pronounce at the laſt day. A ſad thing when a poor creature is Damned above-ground.

3. *When the Word of God doth blinde and harden men in their ſins and vain hopes*, but not convert and ſave them from their ſins. Then God is with his Word, when he doth not ſuffer poor creatures to eſcape from him, when he will not let them alone, but plucks them by the hair of the head as it were out of the fire; when he makes the Devil deliver many ſinful redeemed Souls, then the Lord is with them indeed: but when it is otherwiſe, the Lord is not in his Word, *Mat.*13.15. *Men came into the World and know not wherefore, and go out and know not whither*; though they have many Advantages, yet they ſtand it out to the very laſt; they have been put into ſad plunges in their own ſpirits, but have got over them, and ſo go to Hell inſenſibly. When God is in his Ordinances, then it ſhall be ſaid, *This and that man was born there*, Pſal.87.5. but *when few new-born Chriſtians*, this is a ſymptome God is not in his Word. As when the Seed is ſown, and rots under the clods, but never ſprings

ſprings up, there is no bleſſing, but a ſecret curſe on it. Oh conſider of this! *Are Converſions frequent amongſt us?* Is God pulling men out of this rueful ſtate? If the Lord deny this to his Ordinances, its becauſe he is not in them. *Oh fearful wrath*, to have them, and be hardened by them, and the abuſe of them to anſwer for another day! To have them, and yet to be plagued more then *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* that never heard of them, in that day of Eternal Judgement!

4. *When Ordinances are unprofitable, and empty things*, void of Spiritual advantage; when men uſe them but as bad bargains, they loſe rather then gain by them: as it was with them of old, *Mal.* 3. 14. *What profit? &c.* Hence take up that quarrelling Complaint, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not? &c.* When God is in them, then they bring on to more fellowſhip with God and Chriſt Jeſus; then thoſe that live under them are growing up in the fear of the Lord *as David* (Zech. 12. 8.) *as the Angel of the Lord before them*, vigorous and active Chriſtians, as it was with the *Theſſalonians*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 3. *When the Sun ariſeth with healing under his wings, then they grow up as Calves in the ſtall*, Mal. 4. 2. As *a watered garden*, *Iſa.* 58. 11. And this will be proportionable in root as well as branches, not all head and no heart: but when the contrary hereunto is true, that men languiſh and wither and fall away, time is ſpent in vain, theſe unprofitable hours of life, or if they gain, it is onely in ſome things and not in others; Alas! that men ſhould ſpend time to no purpoſe; that men live in the light of Goſpel diſpenſations, and yet walk in the darkneſs of their own hearts, not knowing whether they muſt go to Heaven or Hell at laſt, little ſtability, little comfort by all the means they enjoy!

5. *When men can bear the Lords abſence, and hidings away of his face, and not lay it to heart as the ſadeſt evil.* They keep Sabbaths, and enjoy no God in them, yet the heart breaks not though it be thus: this is ſad indeed. 'Tis a token that the Lord is not wholly gone, that he is not ſo gone but that he may return again, when he gives a heart to mourn after him; as they 1 *Sam.* 7. *lamented after the Lord*: but when men can go dayes,

weeks, nay it may be moneths together, and *no living communion with God*, and yet never cry, mourn and lament after him, this ſaith the Lord is gone indeed, and ſo gone that unleſs thou awaken ſpeedily (for ought I know this very Sermon) he will never return more, but leave thee deſolate and forſaken to die in thy ſins. Oh! ſhall the Lord depart from thee, and have this to charge upon thee, That he went away from thee for want of being intreated to ſtay with thee?

Uſe IV. May be a word of Exhortation. *Oh make this your main buſineſs, to keep God with you from Generation to Generation:* I beſeech you let this be the care and prayer of every one, *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers.* But this Uſe reſpects both the firſt Generation, and this other Generation. 1. The *firſt Generation*, that have been betruſted with the management of the Kingdome of Chriſt and the Intereſt of Religion (moſtly) hitherto; *Labour to keep God ſtill with you, even as in dayes of old, and alſo to leave his Preſence with the Generations that are to come after you*, that you may ſay upon your death-beds, when you are leaving the world to them that ſucceed, as ſometimes old *Iſrael* did to *Joſeph*, Gen. 48.21. *Behold I die, but God ſhall be with you.*

Here conſider a few things,

Motive 1. *This is the great End why the Lord hath betruſted you, as he hath with his Goſpel*, and why he hath done for you ſuch great things as he hath done, that ſo he might propagate Religion to thoſe that come after you, *Pſal.*78. 5,6,7. It was not for your ſake onely, but for the ſake of your Children, that God made himſelf known unto you; now I beſeech you let not the Lord be diſappointed of his end. God hath not given his Goſpel unto men, that a few *old Chriſtians* may enjoy ſomething of the Preſence of the Lord while they live, and then *carry away the Goſpel and Religion* (as * one ſaid) *into the cold graves with them when they die*; No, but that they might hand down Religion, and engage the Lords Preſence with the Generation after them. *Its part of the Generation-work of every Chriſtian*, to do his utmoſt that the Lords Name and Honour may be held up to the ſucceeding Generation. If you think that

* *Viz.* Worthy Mr. *Mitchell.*

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all the duty that lyes on you is *reſpecting your ſelves onely*, you are much miſtaken: A godly mans work reaches further then ſo, *Pſal.*77.18,19. 'Tis a ſad ſign God hath forſaken a people, when they are unmindful of the work of their Generation. That was *Davids* Spirit, that he would endeavour that Gods Name ſhould be declared to, and embraced by the *people that were to be afterwards*, Pſal.45.17. and *Moſes* his Prayer, *Pſal.* 90.16. and the Lords Promiſe, *Iſa.*58.12. *Thou ſhalt raiſe up* (*Hebr.* ſettle) *the foundations of many Generations*, of Age and Age, *i. e.* Lay ſuch foundations of Holineſs as ſhall endure from Age to Age.

Mot. 2. *To you is committed a ſpecial opportunity of propagating Religion, and the Preſence of God to the Riſing Generation.*

1. In reſpect of *the Lord himſelf, he will do much at the Requeſt of his old Servants.* A man will do much at the importunity of an ancient Acquaintance; *Paul* thought there was ſomething Argumentative, when he writ to *Philemon*, that he was *Paul the aged*; and *David* made uſe of the like Argument with reſpect unto himſelf in reference to this duty, *Pſa.*71.9,18. The Lord knows not how to deny an old Diſciple any thing. You may go to the Lord, and tell him, I have ſerved thee ſo many years, and thou haſt never denied me any good thing to this day; I have asked much, and had much, now I come to ask for the continuance of thy Preſence with the ſucceediug Generation, deny me not now, Lord.

2. In *reſpect of men. As for thoſe that are to ſucceed*, they that are gathering to their fathers have an opportunity to do good, by diſtilling the things of God into their hearts. *Joſhua* and the Elders their Preſence did tend much to the promoting of holineſs, *Joſh.*24.31. *Judg.*2.7. Whilſt *Jehojadah* lived there was an advantage in that, 2 *Chron.* 24. God and Nature hath put an advantage into the hands of the Ancient; *Levit.* 19.32. *Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord: q.d.* You deny me to be Lord, if you do not acknowledge Age.

Mot. 3. *Conſider, that it is for a Generation that I ſpeak, and ſuch a Generation as that by many weighty and momentous Conſide-*

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rations you are bound to tender. As to a Generation; for a Generation, *David* thought it was matter of great moment, *Pſal.* 71.18. *q.d. I had rather die, then outlive the opportunity of making known the Lord to the Riſing Generation.* It is not one, or two, or a few, but a Generation that I plead for; and it is not onely a Generation, but *your Generation:* now I come near indeed, *a Generation that proceeds from your own loyns, and from your own bowels:* Me-thinks this ſhould prove a very feeling Argument. 1 *Chron.*28.9. *Now Solomon my Son*; not Soloman *a Son*, but Solomon *my Son*, I charge thee by the Bond of Relation, that thou *ſerve the God of thy fathers.* And hence *Solomon* himſelf acknowledges his care and inſtruction. What he received from his Parents, was an effect of their endeared affection to him, *Prov.*4.3,4. Fond affections will vent themſelves in fooliſh and temporal things, but ſanctified affection in care to promove holineſs, and engage *the continuance of the Lords Preſence.* Oh what love, what affections, what bowels towards your Children? Have you none? or if you have, how do they put forth? I labour they may have ſomething to live upon when I am gone, they muſt have Houſe and Land, *&c.* and ſhall they not have a God? Shall they have your Eſtate, and not have your God to be their God? Again, they are a Generation of your betruſtments, a Generation committed to your care and charge to bring up for the Lord, and ſo in that ſenſe ſaid to be *the Lords Generation*, Ezek.16.21. God betruſted you with them reſpectively to educate for himſelf. Again,are they not a Generation devoted to the Lord? *Prov.*31.2. *Sons of vows*, more particularly devoted to be the Lords, caſt upon him *from the womb*, *Pſal.*22.10. Again, are they not *a Generation for whoſe ſakes you ran great hazards?* Was it not for their ſakes that many came hither? was not this the end? I pray conſider what was the thing propoſed? *Why came you into this Land? was it not mainly with reſpect to the Riſing Generation?* And what with reſpect to them? was it to leave them a rich and a wealthy people? was it to leave them Houſes, Lands, Livings? Oh no: but to leave God in the midſt of them. Again, are they not a Generation that call for the utmoſt care and help that may be afforded

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to them on all hands, a poor needy Generation hard beſtead, it may be more then their fathers in ſome reſpects, Temptations as great, Corruptions as ſtrong, Hearts as bad, and having been freed from ſuch Perſecutions, Afflictions, &c. they have not had ſuch opportunities their fathers had, to know and ſee what was in their hearts. Me-thinks I ſee them like a company of Children in a Boat that is driven out to Sea, may be it may come to ſhore, but in greater danger to ſink or drown then otherwiſe. Yea, are there not ſad ſymptomes of the Lords departure from them? Is not all in hazard to be loſt? What think you of a Veſſel at Sea that ſprings a leak, and takes in water apace, and Marriners ſome dead, many ſick, a few left to keep Pump going, Are they not in danger to ſink and periſh in the waters? Is it not ſo here? Again, if you conſider the time paſt, or time to come, they both put you upon the utmoſt care and diligence. Time paſt: *How much time is gone, but how little is done for the Riſing Generation?* little Faith, little Prayer, little Pattern-walking. Nay, are there not many that lay ſtumbling-blocks in their way? I know men are apt to complain againſt the Riſing Generation, and it cannot be denied but that there is cauſe enough, I would to God I and all the Lords people were rightly ſenſible of it; but I beſeech you conſider whether you give not too much occaſion thereunto: Do they not ſee *your* Pride, *your* Worldlineſs, *your* Paſſion, *your* Vanity? and doth not this harden and ſtumble them? And if not ſo, yet Duty is neglected; it may be if you prayed more, they would be more gracious: Or with reſpect to time to come, 'tis but a little while like to be with you, we may improve that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 1,13.14. *ſhortly you muſt put off the earthly tabernacle*; therefore improve your little time for the good of them that are to come after you.

Mot.4. Sincere Endeavour to continue the Lords Preſence with after-Generations, ſhall not be without ſome good ſucceſs. I dare be bold to ſay that the Lord will not leave your Poſterity, unleſs by your remiſsneſs you declare you do not much care whether he abide with them yea or no. *Do you your duty, and the Lord will not lye behinde hand in that which is his work:* If you begin to be

glutted with the Preſence of the Lord your ſelves, that you do not think it worth the pains taking, to leave Him and his Preſence as the greateſt Bleſſing to your Children after you, then no marvel though he remove away: But if you are reſolved to keep him not onely with your ſelves, but with yours alſo, I tell you he cannot finde in his heart to leave either you or them, *Prov.*22.6. In an ordinary courſe of Providence it ſhall be ſo; then be able to ſay, as *David* to *Solomon*, 1 Chron. 28.20. *The Lord God, even my God will be with thee, he will not fail thee nor forſake thee.*

Met. 5. *What Comfort will this be, when upon good grounds you are perſwaded the Lord will be with thoſe that come after you, even as he was with you?* No greater joy, then that you have had a care of Poſterity, and that it hath not been in vain, 3 *Joh.* 3.4. this glads the heart of godly Parents, *Prov.* 23. 15,16, 24,25. See *Deut.*30.2.

Queſt. *But what ſhall we do that we may retain the Lords Preſence with us, and convey the ſame to thoſe after us?*

Anſw. *Be willing to do what you can do:* (this makes way for all other Directions) Oh! do what you can for the future Generation. Its true, you cannot give them regenerating and ſanctifying grace, but let not that diſcourage you from what you can: and though you cannot, yet know that one can, who is infinitely more gracious to the Souls of men then thou art. *Neglect not duty, becauſe you cannot do more then your duty:* Oh live a great while in a little time; *Do more in one year, then in ſeven before:* as *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs made more diſpatch of the way the laſt year, then in thirty before; ſo here, reſpecting the Riſing Generation. But more particularly.

1. *If you would have the Preſence of the Lord continued to thoſe that are to come after you, then make ſure of this, that you enjoy the ſpecial Preſence of God your ſelves.* If you would leave Gods Preſence with others, you muſt be ſure to enjoy God your ſelves: If God in Chriſt be your God, then you may have hopes that *God will be the God of your ſeed*, according to the Promiſe, *Gen.*17.7. He that hath no intereſt in God, cannot inſure any intereſt to others: He that hath onely a viſible intereſt

intereſt, an intereſt in the viſible Covenant, he can do no more for his childe but leave that unto him, he cannot believe for any more, nor act faith for any more: *An hypocrite cannot believe that God will be the God of his childe by ſpecial grace*, for he that hath no faith to lay hold of God for himſelf, hath not faith to lay hold of God for his childe: Be ſure therefore of this, that you are under the Promiſe and Covenant in the Spiritual part of it. *You never knew yet, but the Lord did take hold ſavingly of ſome at leaſt of the poſterity of thoſe that were indeed godly.* *David*, a man of great obſervation and experience in the world, tells what he could ſay to this, *Pſal.*37.25. Nay, its made ſome kinde of evidence of Sincerity when a mans repentance is ſuch, as that father and his childe repent too, *Deut.*30.6. Not but that a man may repent, and his childe never repent; its poſſible that a man may be converted, and children many of them never converted, but it is not uſual: this is ſomething a rare thing, that a man ſhould be godly, and his children all ungodly; moſt ordinarily if a man turn with all his heart, his children turn too, ſooner or later, more or fewer of them.

2. *Be very careful in the due performance of Family-duties, towards them that are under your charge.* This is the Lords great Command, *Deut.*6.7. and *Abrahams* ſpecial Commendation, *Gen.*18.19. the want of this the Lord puniſhes with rejecting ſuch children, 1 *Sam.*3.15.

But what are theſe Duties?

1. *Overſight of the wayes of the Family, that they yield outward Obedience to God*, and particularly in *Sanctifying the Sabbath.* You ſhall finde Religion lives and dies, as men are exact or remiſs in obſerving the Sabbath: And it is obſerveable, that the very words of the fourth Commandment doth expreſly binde all Maſters of Families, (which is not to be found in any other Commandment) *Thou, and thy Son, and thy Daughter*, *Exod.*20.10. the Lord ſpeaks by name to Family-governours, as if it were to make them Overſeers of ſanctifying the Sabbath.

2. *To inſtruct them in matters of Religion, that they may not onely profeſs it, but feel the power of it in life and converſation.*

Thus were Parents commanded of old, *Deut.*6.7. *Prov.*22.6. 2 *Tim.*3.15.

3. *A careful Endeavour that they may profit by the Publick Miniſtry.* When Miniſters work in Publick is done, the Family work begins: for this, ſee Chriſts example, *Mark* 4.13.

4. *A declaration of the admirable works of God for his people,* Joſh.4.6,21. Pſal.22.31. & 78.4.

5. *By giving them a good Example:* Precept without Patterns will do little good; you muſt lead them to Chriſt by Examples as well as Counſel; you muſt ſet *your ſelves firſt*, and ſpeak by Lives as well as words; you muſt live Religion, as well as talk Religion, *Joſh.*24.15. This is rather to be attended, becauſe Families are the Seminaries of Church and Common-wealth. *Keep the Lord with you in Families, and keep him then in all Societies; let him go thence, and he will quickly go from the reſt.* Here begins all Apoſtacy and degeneration; the ruine of Churches and Country ſprings from thence: *Ruine Families, and ruine all:* So on the other hand, keep God there, and keep him every-where. The Generation to come will reap the fruit of Family-Education; ſuch Children as you bring up, ſuch Parents will they be, when you are gone, to their Children, and ſuch Children ſhall they have who are Parents in the next Generation. *You then that are Governours of Families, are the very making or marring of the world,* Pſa.144.12. Unleſs Poſterity be poliſhed, hewn and ſquared by Domeſtical Diſcipline, they are never fit to be ſtones in Gods building. Are not ſome Parents worſe then that rich Glutton, who being in Hell deſired concerning his fathers houſe, that they might be forewarned, and therefore deſired *Abraham* to ſend *Lazarus to his brethren to teſtifie to them, that they come not to the place of torment,* Luke 16.27,28? But you will not admoniſh them, you will not teach them *Moſes* and the Prophets, you will not ſhew them the danger hanging over their heads, you will not lead a good Example before them while you live. Oh! you may fear that your Children one day will curſe you, and wiſh that they had been the Children of *Indians* rather.

3. *Keep as much of God as you were wont to do in your own Hearts*

Hearts and Converſations: Suffer not the Lord to go away in any degree or meaſure out of your hearts. In a word, keep up the life and power of godlineſs in your own Souls. *The Lord never takes away his viſible preſence from the ſucceeding Generation, unleſs he take away his ſecret inward preſence from former Generations.* The ſecond Generation ſeldome or ever prove totall Apoſtates, but the firſt are deep ſecret Heart-revolters. Heart-ſins in the firſt, grow up into Life-ſins in the ſecond; if you decline at all, they will decline altogether. *The loſs of the firſt love is enough to remove the Candleſtick,* Rev. 2. 4, 5. You complain againſt the Pride, Profaneneſs of young ones, and alas that there is ſuch cauſe! Oh but who is there amongſt you that cries out of the ſecret ſins of their own hearts? Thoſe ſins of a ſecond growth of Profaneneſs in ſome, Worldlineſs in many, Deadneſs and Formality in all; Ah! who is it that looks on the hard heartedneſs, impenitency of this ſecond Generation, and ſayes, that now the Lord is puniſhing my hard heartedneſs upon my Childe, he is whipping me on his back. Men, Brethren and Fathers, You had once another Spirit, had you not? *A right New-England Spirit.* Oh! ſhould I knock at your breaſt, and ask, Is the old Zeal, Love, Heavenly-mindedneſs that was in this Heart twenty, thirty years ago, is it there ſtill? Are you the ſame men you were? Are you not ſtrangely changed? Have you as much of God as you had? Hath not the World got ſomething? Wife and Children ſomething? Trials and Temptations of a *New Place,* or hard beginnings got ſomething? Oh! have you not lived to ſee much of your former life and godlineſs laid in the grave? Have you the ſame Hearts you had? Are your worſt dayes now as good as your beſt then? ſo it is with growing Saints that live much with God: Or rather is not the contrary true, that you are grown old and grown cold; cold indeed, cold at heart; Aged in years, and decayed in power of godlineſs! But why do I complain? Let me perſwade; *Oh recover, recover ſtrength for your own Souls ſake, and for the ſake of the Generation that is to come after you.* How can you hope that you ſhould ever finde much of the Lords Preſence, if you that once had it loſe it, and ſee it no

more? *If in your time Profeſſion and Lukewarmneſs* go hand in hand together, then *in thoſe that come after you Profeſſion and Profaneneſs* ſhall go hand in hand together: If you keep your Religion and Forms with their *buts*, they that ſucceed will be Profeſſors with their *buts*. You are Chriſtians, Ay! *but* cold, *but* dead, *but* lifeleſs: They ſhall be Profeſſors, *but* vicious, *but* jeering, *but* ſcoffing, *but* drinking Companions. What hopes that the next Generation will ever enjoy much of the Preſence of Gods grace, and power of godlineſs, if you ſee it dead and buried before you go to your graves? I remember what the Prophet *Elijah* ſaid to *Eliſha*, if he could ſee when he was taken up in the fiery Chariot, it ſhould be ſo, but if not, it ſhould not be ſo, 2 *Kings* 2.10. I allude to it thus; If the Riſing Generation could ſee you going to Heaven with a great meaſure of Zeal, Life, Spiritualneſs, then there might be ſome hopes, that they that are left behinde might enjoy a double portion of your Spirit; but if they ſee your Life loſt, Love cooled, Godlineſs decayed, how can it be?

4. *Lay out Faith and Prayer for them to the utmoſt*: There is no help in Earth, but there is help in Heaven. *Plead with God, and plead hard*; *Believe, and believe ſtrongly*: Pray more, and ſpeed better; the Lord will ſuffer himſelf to be Commanded in this caſe, *Iſa.*45.11. you have very good hold of God in the Word, *Deut.*30.6. and when you pray, you muſt pray feelingly, *i.e.* with a heart ſenſible of their ſins. *Let the ſins of the Riſing Generation, be the burthen of the firſt Generation*; their Unbelief, the matter of their Complaint before the Lord. *Many complain their Children have not ſuch Priviledges as they ought, I pray God grant that they may all have what the Lord hath appointed for them*: But alas! where is the man that complains, that his Childe wants ſaving knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt? Oh where is the Parent that ſayes in bitterneſs of Soul, My Childe hath a hard Heart, and a proud Will, an unteachable Spirit; Civil he is, but alas, that's all the Religion I can ſee? Oh that there were more of thoſe Complaints in ſecret before the Lord! I verily believe the Lord will awaken a Spirit of Prayer, before he gives us any ſure pledges of his abiding with us, in all

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ſorts of men amongſt us. See how *David* prayes for *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.*29.19. and this will fetch bleſſings. *Win it in Heaven, and wear it in Earth.* *Monica*, *Auſtin's* Mother, after ſhe had cried and wept to a godly Miniſter for her then ungodly Son, was anſwered by that good man, *Fieri nequit ut filius tantarum lacrymarum pereat*; It cannot be that a Childe of ſo many Prayers and Tears ſhould periſh. And it is obſerveable, That before the Lord give out any ſpecial *Generation-mercy*, he humbles, he prepares his people for that mercy by deep humiliation, he uſually layes them exceeding low as in firſt Converſion, with reſpect to perſonal mercies, ſo with reſpect to Generation-mercy. The continuance of the Lords Preſence Generation after Generation, is a very ſignal mercy, and God the Lord will humble his people in order to this mercy, and this humiliation will cauſe you to ſanctifie Gods Name, though he ſhould take away his Preſence, *Ezek.*3.12. Secondly, He brings a ſentence of death on the mercy, that to the eye of Senſe and Reaſon there is no likelihood that ever it ſhould come to paſs, nay it grows more unlikely every day then other; as with *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, *Exod.*5. *Iſaac* muſt be bound, laid on the Altar, the knife at his throat, that ſo Faith might receive him, as it were from the dead. *Truly this makes me hope that the Lords Preſence may yet continue with his people in our Generations, becauſe that mercy ſeems to be a dead mercy:* There is no likelihood that it ſhould be ſo, the knife is at *Iſaac's* throat; Faith can fetch *Iſaac* from the Altar, *Iſa.*26.19. When Churches are dead, and the Members of Churches are dead, yet then the Covenant lives, the Promiſe lives. Oh look to the Lord in that word *Iſa.* 65. 22, *to the end*, and 62.9.

5. *If you would have God to be with you and yours after you, then ſee that you, each one in your reſpective places, are with and for the Lord:* You have the duty and encouragement laid before you, 2 *Chron.*15.2. A profeſſing People they alwayes break with God firſt, before he breaks with them. 'Tis the very end of the Lords works and diſpenſations to you, that ſo you might be for him, *Iſa.*43.21. *Queſt.* But you will ſay, *What is this to be with the Lord? How ſhall we be ſo with or for the Lord, as*

that

that we may be ſure he will ſtill be with and for us? Anſ. *Work, and work for God in your ſeveral capacities*; Parents, Husbands, Wives, if you do not work for him, you are not with him: *Mark* 13.34. *He gave to every man his work*, and therefore it is that their working with God is ſaid to be a being with God, *Hoſ.*9.8. *The watchmen of Ephraim was with my God*; i.e. they did the work of God: and ſo walking with God, as you may ſee by that of *David*, 1 *Kings* 4. and of *Hezekiah*, 2 *King.*18. 6,7. 2. *Be for the ſpecial intereſt of God*: Mat.12.30. *He that is not with me is againſt me*; Zech.9.7. *He that remaineth ſhall be for our God*, i.e. for his Glory, for his Chriſt, for his Cauſe. Labour therefore for a Publick Spirit, let all your own intereſt give way to his; Oh let nothing be dear in compariſon of Chriſt and his intereſt, *Acts* 20.24. To be of a private Spirit is not to be for God. 3. *In a ſpecial manner ſee that you are for his Inſtitutions*: This is called *the Kingdome of God*, *Acts* 1.3. If for Chriſt, then for his Kingdome. *That man is not for God or Chriſt, that is not for Ordinances*: Theſe are called *the Name of Chriſt*, Acts 15.14,16. He that is not for building Gods Tabernacle, would not indeed that God ſhould have a Name amongſt men. *Remember what you ſaid when you came into the Church*, Iſa.44.5. *I am the Lords*; eſpecially *ſee that you be for thoſe Inſtitutions and Ordinances that are ordained by Chriſt, to bring the Riſing Generation into a profeſſed ſubjection unto the Goſpel of Chriſt. Oh take heed how we turn them out of Gods Inheritance, leſt you bring a curſe upon your Souls, and their Souls after you*, 1 Sam.28.19. *When God takes them into his Covenant, he ſaith he will be a God to them*, Gen. 17. *Take heed how you deny them any part in the Lord, leſt thereby they turn to ſerve other gods*, Joſh.22.24,25. *Where the Lord will enlarge Covenant-mercy, Oh tremble to ſtraighten it or bound it to the Precepts of men: we and our poor Children after us, have need enough of all the grace of the Covenant, let us not deſpiſe it, or caſt them out our ſelves from it. If that be the Lords word, that the children of his ſervants ſhall continue, and their ſeed be eſtabliſhed before him*, Pſal. 102. 28. *Labour not to make that Promiſe of no effect. Moſt certain it is, that the Lords Preſence is to be ſought and enjoyed in Gods Wayes,*

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and in them only. Will the Lord abide with a Generation that have nothing to do with a Church-ſtate, *Ordinances, Miniſtry, and the viſible outward Adminiſtrations of the things of his Houſe? I know he may for a while; But will he long? No verily, if they muſt have nothing to do with theſe, God will have nothing to do with them.*

6. *Maintain a Spirit of Love towards God, and towards one another:* If you love, he will not leave you. Be not like *Epheſus* that *loſt their firſt love*, but repent and do your *firſt works*, Rev. 2. 3. Love is a uniting grace, and will not let the perſon beloved go: This keeps God in Heaven, becauſe nothing but love is there; for where that is, he will be, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. *Joh.* 14. 23. If ever the Lord leave you or yours after you, it will be becauſe he is not loved: and if it be asked why did the Lord ſo ſoon forſake his people, after that he had done ſo much for them? the Lord will anſwer and ſay, It was becauſe I could not have their hearts, I went away for want of love. Oh! it is matter of ſad lamentation, that *there is ſuch a ſpirit of dying affection towards Chriſt in New-England.* There is ſad declinings in the Spirit of the Churches, the Lord knows: If the Lord take away any thing of his Preſence, they can make up the want of God in the enjoyment of the Creature; as ſome men do when they paſs by old hedges, they throw buſhes in and ſtop up gaps, ſo do men ſtop all their gaps, all their breaches, with brambles and buſhes of Creatures: yea ſome, if the Lord take away any choice mercy from them, what do they do? why, they grow jealous of him, and love him the leſs; the reaſon why he takes away their beloved, is that he may have their whole heart, *Hoſ.* 2. 6. Ah! how many particular perſons are there unto whom Chriſt is a ſtumbling-block? ſome offended at one thing, ſome at another; ſome like not this Rule, ſome not that Command; ſome are diſpleaſed at this Providence, and others at that: Oh that you would conſult with your own hearts! Have you quit one luſt for Chriſt? more delight it may be in vain jollity, then in ſecret Prayer. 2. Love one to another, 2 *Cor.* 13. Breaches make way for God to be gone.

7. *Get a ſympathizing Spirit with the gaſping, groaning, bleeding and dying condition of that Generation that are to ſucceed you.* Oh! look upon them with an eye of pity, and let your hearts mourn

much for them in ſecret. It may be they ſpeak not for your compaſſions, and how ſhall they? many of them know not their own miſery: but their condition calls aloud for all the Prayers, Tears, Faith of the Lords precious ones amongſt us.

1. Take a view *of their preſent ſtate*; And what is it? Is it not that which juſtly deſerves all the compaſſions that may be? If to be without God and Chriſt, and in danger of death and ruine every moment; if to be dead to all Calls, and bold and deſperate in wayes of Sin and Security, be a condition to be pitied, many of them need pity. Ah! did thy Redeemer mourn over thy Soul, and haſt thou no tears for others? It's ſaid of Chriſt when he came to *Lazarus* grave, *He wept, becauſe he loved him*; Do you not go to the graves of dead Souls every day? but where is your affectionate rowling of bowels? where are your ſighs and groans? poſſibly one may hear you complain and bewail their deprivement of outward Priviledges; Oh but where is that man, and where is the woman that bewails before the Lord the Spiritual miſery of young men and women? that faith in ſecret, Oh what Preaching do they enjoy, what Sermons do they hear, what Means do they partake of? Oh but what hearts have they? Oh how blinded, how hardened, how unperſwadeable! as if the the Lord ſent his Meſſenger upon that errand *Iſa.*6.10.

2. Conſider *preſent Providences*, and they call for pity and compaſſion towards them: The things that concern their peace and comfort cannot be effected and accompliſhed for their good; much talking, but little practiſing: Nay, that which concerns their Intereſt is made the Butt of Contention, as if the Lord would *divide his people*, when they are conſpiring to promote the welfare of the Riſing Generation. Again, *thoſe that are moſt likely to promove their beſt good, are ſnatched away apace one after another.* What will become of poor Children, when Heads of Families die? what will become of unskilful Paſſengers, when Pilot and able Steerman is taken away? *What will become of this Generation, when theſe that ſhould lead them and light them in the way of Heaven, may not live out half their dayes amongſt them!* Good Lord, let not that befall them, that ſometime did *Iſrael* of old, that they ſhould have ſuch Prophets as ſhould make them vain, and ſpeak a viſion

☞ *Deus avertat Omen!*

of

of their own hearts, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; that ſhould ſay to them that deſpiſe God, The Lord hath ſaid ye ſhall have peace; and to every one that walketh in the imagination of his own heart, No evil ſhall come to you: ſo that they ſhould ſtrengthen the hand of evil doers, that none return from his wickedneſs, but that from the Prophets of *Jeruſalem* profaneneſs ſhall go forth into all the Land, *Jer.*23.14,16,19.

Again, 3. *If you look to what their condition is like to be at laſt*; Will God bear alwayes with a carnal unſavoury Generation? Muſt they not bring good fruit, or elſe will they not be in danger to be cut down? *Mat.*3.10 Will a few Leaves of Civility and Formality ſave them from the curſe? will ſuch lifting up to Heaven not make way to the thruſting down to Hell? *Mat.*11.23, This I will ſay, that amongſt the poſterity of a profeſſing people, they will *either be the moſt happy, or the moſt unhappy Generation.* Oh! go get a ſpirit of pity then; You can do but little, but can you not pray? have you no bowels? have you no tears? Oh go draw them on to godlineſs, bring them near to God by Faith and Prayer, yea and by all wayes of his appointment, count it not want of grace ſo to do; Whether think you had more grace, Chriſt or his Diſciples? yet we ſee Chriſt was tender towards Children, and loth to reject them, when as his Diſciples were rigid towards them.

But it is time for us to addreſs our ſelves *to this preſent Generation.* I may ſpeak unto you in the words of *Daniel*, (Dan.5.27.) *Wherefore let my Counſel be acceptable unto you*, retain the Lords Preſence with you. I know it is a very difficult thing to ſpeak prevailingly unto a Generation that have been brought up under the ſolemn Warnings of Gods Word, and yet not wrought upon; It's a very difficult thing to do good in a backſliding time, when men have been accuſtomed to ſend away the Lord from their hearts: It's now a hard work to perſwade men to hold him by main ſtrength, and not to let him go. In times of degeneracy there is not much likelihood of doing much good, *Jer.*25.3,4,5. Secure hearts that have had many Means, many Warnings, many Years, and not awakened, if one ſhould riſe from the dead to ſuch an one he will do little good, *Luke* 16.31. Yet I will try *once more*

more what the Lord will do, though me-thinks my work is ſomething like *Ezekiels*, *Chap.*37. who was there commanded to propheſie over dead bones: I know I have dead hearts to deal withall, but yet the Lord may breathe the breath of life into them; *Therefore, O Generation, ſee ye the Word of the Lord*, Jer.2.31. *You that are the ſucceeding and ſurviving Generation, whatever you part with, part not with God*; keep God with you whatever you keep, or not keep. And to ſtir up hereunto, let me ſpread before you theſe Conſiderations.

1. *That the Lord will moſt undoubtedly leave and forſake you, unleſs you do to the utmoſt of what you can do to keep him amongſt you.* The Lord is reſolved on it, he will not abide with you, except you do beſiege him with your prayers, tears, cries and groans not to be gone: *Solomon* did no more then need required, when he cried to him, *Be with us.* Verily the Lord will not thruſt himſelf upon ſuch a Generation as do but little care for his Preſence; If you are of an indifferent ſpirit, at a kinde of diſway in your own thoughts as it were, the Lord will ſoon reſolve the caſe, *Pſa.* 132.11.12. And therefore take the Counſel the Lord gives, *Jer.* 6. 8. *Be inſtructed, leſt my ſoul depart from you.* Make no other account but the Lord will take away his Preſence and leave you deſolate, except you rowſe up out of your Security, and be more in earneſt with him then you have been hitherto. Thoſe endeavours that you have put forth, will not keep God amongſt you: If you ſeek him with all your heart and ſoul, you may finde him, *Deut.* 4. and after the ſame manner that he is found, he is kept amongſt a people, and therefore I may make uſe of thoſe words, *Who is on the Lords ſide*, who? *Who* is bent to keep the Preſence of God with them, as he was with their fathers, *Who?* Ah! how will you ever be able to ſtand before God, men, or your own Conſciences another day, when it ſhall be charged upon you, that it was becauſe of your ſloth and negligence & ſupine ſecurity that God is gone from the midſt of you?

Mot. 2. *There is no little Expectation concerning you*; You are a Generation of great hopes and great fears: The Lord expects much from you, that you will do much for the glory of his Name, *Iſa.*63 8. *He ſaid, Surely they are children that will not lie*; he hath been

been expecting a long time, *Luke* 13.7. and your predeceſſors, thoſe that have been before you, all their expectations under God himſelf, are in you: they hope you will ſtand up in their ſtead, and bear up the Cauſe of Religion when they are gone: And ſo alſo you are a Generation of great fears; ſome they have a holy fear concerning you, ſuch a fear as was ſometimes in the heart of *Job* towards his Children, *Chap.* 1. leſt you ſhould ſin againſt God, leſt you ſhould forget God, and the things of God: yea the Lord is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf ſo, as if he had ſome fears concerning the riſing and ſucceeding Generation of a profeſſing people, *Pſal.*78.5. And ſome they have a ſinful fear; Satan and all wicked men they are affraid what you will do, they are affraid leſt you ſhould *ſtrengthen what your fathers have done before you:* And I pray take notice what you have in your hands, it is to promove or interrupt the glory of Religion; you will be inſtrumentall (above what your fathers have been) either to the advantage or diſadvantage of Religion; the Name of Chriſt will either gain or loſe much by you. If two Generations be for God and the wayes of God, this will be for the honour of Gods Name; and therefore it is that the Lord is ſo delighted in his Name, *I am the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, the God of three Generations. it's greatly for the glory of God, when Truth hath the advantage of a double Generation; ſo on the contrary Religion will ſuffer exceedingly if you deſert it. If it be ſaid, that the very children pulled down what their fathers builded, this will caſt diſhonour upon the way they walked in, *Judg.*2.17. and the Lord complains of wrong and reproach caſt upon him, when men turn away from him to wayes of ſin, *Jer.*2.5. I may allude to the words of *Paul* ſpoken in another caſe, 1 *Cor.*9.15. *It were better for me to die, then that any ſhould make my glory void*; it were better for you to die, then that Gods Name ſhould ſuffer by you, as it will ſuffer if you keep not the Lords Preſence with you. Oh take heed what you do, take heed how you ſad the heart of God, and godly men, and how you glad the heart of Satan and the wicked. 1 Chron 28.1.

Mot. 3. *Conſider that it is the turn of your Generation to ſtand up for God, and what can you do for him if he be not with you?* Elders are gathered away both in Church and Common-wealth, their

work is done as to many of them already, and the Goſpel and Ordinances are to be tranſmitted into your hands, the Affairs of Chriſts Kingdome will be upon your ſhoulders; Your fathers before you ſerved God in their Generation, *Judg.*2.7. *Acts* 13.36. they lived and died in the faith of the Goſpel, and the profeſſion thereof, and now you come to act your part, the Lords voice to you is, *Look you now to it*, I truſted your fathers, and gave them my Laws and Statutes, and they were faithful to their death, and now they reſt from their labours, and their works follow them, and now I put the like upon you that I did upon them: Oh how will you manage this betruſtment without the Lords Preſence? Conſider 1. *The greatneſs of your Generation work*; 'tis too heavy for the ſhoulders of any Angel in heaven to bear: Look at perſonal concerns, look at publick concerns, its not work for men, for our ſelves, but for God. 2. The dayes wherein you live are backſliding times, *evil dayes*, 2 *Tim.*3.1. times of great degeneracy and Apoſtacy: Alas! little humble walking now, little ſelf-denial, little holineſs; Oh how weighty and difficult is their work, that are now called out to ſtand up for Chriſt? It is difficult at any time, *Onus humeris Angelicis formidandum*, as *Chryſoſtom* ſaith concerning the work of the Miniſtry, *A burthen that the ſhoulders of Angels might ſhake to come under*, but eſpecially in ſuch times wherein we are fallen: How hard is it to keep up an Houſe when it's falling down, to keep the Ship from ſinking, when the leak that is ſprung hath almoſt filled it with water. 3. The hands that help they are but few, and thoſe that hinder are many: what can be done at ſuch a time as this, if the *Lords preſence* be not with us?

Mot.4. *You have many ſpecial Engagements to hold God with you, he is your fathers God, and not willing to leave you*: The holy Ghoſt gives counſel not to forſake our fathers friend, *Prov.*27.9. much leſs *your fathers God*. It's an heart-endearing conſideration, that God was the God of Relations, this helps to ſweeten the preſence of God to us; as men in other things they will not part with what was their Progenitors, Oh this was my fathers, and I will not part with it: ſo here, *Exod.*15.2. he is a God left, commended and bequeathed to you by your fathers; Thoſe that knew how good he was, left this with you as their moſt weighty Counſel,

that

that whatever you did, you would make choice of the Lord to be your God, 1 *Chro.*28.9. 1 *Kin.*2.3,4. 3. You have the pattern and example of thoſe that were before you to encourage hereunto: what is it not well with them? did they not live in peace and die in comfort? *Peace and truth was in their dayes*; they never repented of their choice they made: verily their holineſs will be a dreadful witneſs againſt you, when the Lord ſhall ſay as *Jer.*22.15,16. But Gods Preſence was life to them: we may well ſay as *Ruth* 1. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; whither thou goeſt I will go, thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God.* 4. The coſt and care that Predeceſſors have been at, that ſo they might leave God with children, is to be ſeriouſly thought of, they may ſay of the Goſpel and Ordinances thereof, as 2 *Sam.*23.17. They purchaſed them with hazard of their lives, as ſometimes *Jacob* gave *Joſeph* a bleſſing, that he took out of the hand of the *Amorites* with his ſword and bowe, *Gen.*48.22.

Mot.5. *What will become of you if God be not with you?* what a condition will you then be in, if God leave you and caſt you out of his ſight? *Jer.*16.12,13. 1. Your ſins will be worſe then the ſins of others, 2 *Kin.* 21.11. 2. You will not be one whit better in reſpect of any Spiritual advantage, that you have ſprung from thoſe that had the Lord to be their God, *Ezek.*16.2,3,4,5. *Iſa.*57.3,4. 3. The want of Gods Preſence will bring a curſe upon all bleſſings, and make your condition more miſerable then the worſt. In this life nothing but plagues, woes, miſeries, *Hoſ.*3.3. *Deut.*31.17. yea enemies that ſhall prey on you, will pretend they do it juſtly, *Jer.*50.7. Ordinances, Sabbaths, Sermons, ſhall blinde, harden, and ſeal you up in ſin. Oh! to be prayed, heard, wept down to Hell, how dreadful is that? You ſhall be plagued above others, *Amos* 3.2. Gods hand will follow you, *Judg.*2.15. and at laſt you ſhall die in ſin, *Ezek.*18. 9,10. and be caſt off for ever, 1 *Chron.*29.9. *Jer.*16.12,13. and go to Hell, though the children of *Abraham*, *Luk.*16.24. your godly Parents will be ſo far from helping you, that they will rejoyce and bleſs God for executing Juſtice upon you to all Eternity; neither your fathers, nor the God of your fathers will own you: But oh let it be our prayer and care, *that the Lord our God may be with us, as he was with our fathers, let him not leave us nor forſake us.*

Reader, The Author had intended another Sermon by way of Direction to thoſe of the *Riſing Generation*, to ſhew them what courſe they muſt take, that the Lords gracious Preſence may be *ſucceſſively continued*. But here *God took him from ſerving his Generation*, who are by reaſon of the Authors death deprived of the benefit of thoſe Meditations.